



*Do not be afraid,  
for see, I am  
bringing you good  
news of great joy  
for all the people.*



**Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve**

**December 24, 2025**

*In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.*

---

## **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

---

### **PRELUDE**

#### ***Now Sing We, Now Rejoice***

Arr. Paul Manz  
One License #10-353.3

#### ***Still, Still, Still***

Arr. Paul Manz  
One License #10-360-09

#### ***Meditation on Silent Night***

Arr. Gilbert M. Martin  
One License #1021248

### **WELCOME**

### **ENTRANCE HYMN:**

***Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*** RED ELW #283  
(Vs. 1 & 2)

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the king of angels:

### ***Refrain***

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!

- 2 The highest, most holy,  
light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! ***Refrain***

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2  
Public Domain

### **CHRISTMAS DIALOG**

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world!

**He is the Light no darkness can overcome.**

At darkest night we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation.

**With the heavenly host we sing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven."**

In Christ, God's Word is made flesh and lives among us.

**With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.**

### **HYMN**

***Go, Tell It on the Mountain* RED ELW #290  
(Vs. 1 & 3)**

### ***Refrain***

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. ***Refrain***

**3 Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born;  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.  
Public Domain

**GREETING AND PRAYER**

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

**you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

---

**WORD**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

---

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7**

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders,  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup> Great will be his authority,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **HYMN**

***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* RED ELW #270  
(Vs. 1 & 3)**

**1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise;  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

## **Refrain**

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"

**3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!  
Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth,  
born to give us second birth. Refrain**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.  
Public Domain

## **GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

<sup>8</sup> Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a

manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **HYMN**

*Away in a Manger* RED ELW #277  
(Vs. 1 & 2)

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Text: North American, 19th cent.  
Public Domain

## **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* RED ELW #276  
(Vs. 1)

- 1 Infant holy, infant lowly,  
for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing  
Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swiftly winging, angels singing,  
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.  
Public Domain

## THE PRAYERS

Wonderful Counselor, increase our joy as the church gathers on this holy night to sing of our dear Savior's birth. May the story of salvation live in the hearts of all who sing of its wonders.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, you have broken the yoke of sin's burden through the birth of your Son. Comfort those whose burdens distract them from the deeper peace of this holy night and grant them a restful mind.

God of peace, **hear our prayer.**

Everlasting Father, uphold all who are in sorrow or need of your divine goodness and mercy (*especially*). We remember with thanksgiving all who have died and who now rest in your peaceful light.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, bathe us always in the light of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

---

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

---

## OFFERING

### ***The Birthday of A King***

Soloist: Sam Bullert

Arr. W.H. Neidlinger

One License #281409



## OFFERTORY HYMN

*What Child Is This* RED ELW #296  
(Vs. 1)

- 1** What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898  
Public Domain

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory,  
great are your wonders among us  
and many are the blessings you bestow.  
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,  
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,  
through Christ our Savior.  
Amen.

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

### **HOLY HOLY HOLY**

**RED ELW page 207**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest,  
hosanna in the highest.**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord, Jesus Christ took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God is now in flesh appearing.  
Come to the feast of joy!

## COMMUNION

*(Zion practices an open table. God welcomes everyone to come forward. Young children may receive bread and a blessing. If you prefer not to receive, fold your hands and receive a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available; please ask your servers. Come to the Lord's table and share in the feast!)*

## LAMB OF GOD

RED ELW page 146

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace.

## COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

*Lullaby on Christmas Eve*

One License #93408

*What Is This Lovely Fragrance*

Arr. Paul Manz

One License #10-357.02

## COMMUNION BLESSING

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.  
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts  
the mystery of your presence.  
Move us to discover the wonders of your love  
in the everyday moments of our lives,  
through Christ born in us.  
Amen.

---

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

---

### SPREADING OF THE LIGHT

***O Holy Night***

Bullert Family

One License #211091

### HYMN OF LIGHT

***Silent Night, Holy Night!*** RED ELW #281

- 1 Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885  
Public Domain

## **BLESSING**

May the Lord God, who has called you out of darkness to be servants of light, grant you the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child. In the name of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*The candles are extinguished.*

## **SENDING HYMN**

*Joy to the World* RED ELW #267

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

***O Come All Ye Faithful***

Gilbert M. Martin

One License #1048132



### Acknowledgements:

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com). Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved.

License #SB122759—11/30/2026

**One License #A-732489**

4/15/2026 for ELW hymns

All rights reserved.

**CCLI License #20990483**

Copyright License + Streaming License—2/28/2026

All rights reserved.

**Church ArtPro**

Account #73982207—6/30/2026

Zion Lutheran Church  
814 West Brooks St. P.O. Box 371  
Arlington, MN 55307  
Church: 507-964-5454  
Email: [zion.elca.814@gmail.com](mailto:zion.elca.814@gmail.com)  
Web: [zionarlington.org](http://zionarlington.org) // YouTube: Zion ELCA Arlington MN

## Worship Assistants

Rev. Gretchen Pierskalla  
Organist: Bobette Schauer  
Pianist: Linnea Bullert  
Violins: Sam Bullert, Ashtyn Bullert  
Reader: Laurie Stern  
Soloist: Sam Bullert  
Acolyte: Jack Ruehling  
Greeter: Starla Schilling  
Usher: Jan Wark, Scott Bergs  
Peg Kamps, Adilyn Kamps  
AV Team: Tim Michaelis & Joe Prasad  
Altar Guild: Jackie Alsleben  
Bread Maker: Larry Schiroo  
Paraments: Larry Gieseke



Darrel & Jackie Alsleben

Jane Scharpe

Joyce Bening

Bobette Schauer

Jim & Ann Carlson

Mark & Lisa Strobel

Sher Kumar

Mary Sylwester

Pr. Gretchen & John Pierskalla

John & Lana Woehler

Joe Prasad



God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith;  
the warmth of Christmas, which is love;  
the radiance of Christmas, which is purity;  
the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice;  
the belief in Christmas, which is truth;  
the all of Christmas, which is Christ.

-Wilda English